



May 24, 2007

TO: Transportation Authority of Marin Commissioners

FROM: Dianne Steinhauser, Executive Director

THROUGH: Bill Gamlen, Manager for Project Delivery

RE: Project Delivery Status – 580/101 Connector Project, Agenda Item 5c

### **Executive Summary**

In February 2007 the California Transportation Commission (CTC) committed \$20 Million in Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) funds to the 580/101 Connector Project. In addition, TAM and Caltrans are currently implementing Segment 3 and 4 of the U.S. 101 Gap Closure HOV Project which are scheduled to complete construction in the third quarter of 2009. Staff would like to expedite the implementation of the 580/101 Connector Project so that it is in construction before Segment 4 of the Gap Closure Project completes its construction. Staff believes that TAM could save time by managing the support functions for the project with its own consultant. Therefore, staff is seeking concurrence from the Board that Caltrans designate TAM to be the implementing agency in developing the Plans, Specifications, and Estimate (PS&E) and overseeing any remaining environmental assessment of the project, as well as any right of way activity. Note that right of way will be limited to city street utility relocation, which will be coordinated by TAM with the City of San Rafael. There is no planned right of way acquisition.

**Recommendation: Authorize staff to request Caltrans designate TAM to be the implementing agency in developing the PS&E and performing any environmental re-evaluation and right of way work for the 580/101 Connector Project.**

### **Background**

TAM, Caltrans District 4, the Cities of San Rafael, Larkspur, and Town of Corte Madera have been jointly working together to develop continuous High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on Highway 101 where there have been “gaps”, or areas without HOV lanes. The Central San Rafael segment of the Gap Closure work is currently in construction and the final piece, Segment 4, is currently out for bids. Thus, the final gap in the HOV lanes is slated to be closed in the Fall of 2009.

While the Gap Closure projects have and will greatly reduce congestion and travel times on Highway 101, an area that remains a bottleneck is the Interstate 580 westbound connection to northbound Highway 101. At this connection, Interstate 580 reduces from two lanes to one before merging into Highway 101. Simultaneously, the Bellam onramp adds traffic to the connector. Thus, this merge becomes the source of significant traffic congestion.

The 580/101 Connector project is planned to accomplish three things: 1) provide congestion relief to motorists traveling from westbound 580 to northbound Highway 101 by adding a second connector lane; 2) provide additional capacity to the 580 exit ramp at Bellam Boulevard; and 3) improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and circulation in the vicinity of the 580 on and off ramps.

The 580/101 connector improvements were included in the Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/R) prepared for the Highway 101 Gap Closure. The EIS/R was finalized on December 28, 1999. The FHWA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) on August 31, 2000. Since the environmental document was completed some time ago, there may be a need to perform an environmental re-evaluation, or even a new environmental document. Staff believes that in either case, this would be a minor effort since little has changed with regard to the project or the project's surroundings and could be undertaken currently with the engineering design effort.

There is currently no additional right-of-way anticipated for the project. The current project scope calls for the project to be constructed completely within state and City of San Rafael right-of-way.

In February 2007, Marin County received \$20 Million in Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) funding for the project. The CMIA funding provides funding for the entire project, including project soft costs for such activities as developing Plans, Specifications, and Estimate (PS&E), managing construction and overall project administration.

Staff desires to expedite the project in order to adhere to CMIA time frames and to deliver a project as close to the completion of the Gap Closure projects as possible. Therefore, staff is requesting Board approval to lobby Caltrans to allow TAM to be the implementing agency in developing PS&E and performing any environmental re-evaluation work and right of way/ utility work for the 580/101 Connector Project. Staff believes that they can implement the project faster by utilizing a consultant firm to develop PS&E with Caltrans providing oversight. Staff has discussed this approach with Caltrans District 4 staff and they concurred with the idea. Thus, with Board approval for TAM to lead the PS&E effort, staff will issue a Request-for-Proposals (RFP) for engineering, environmental, and right of way services.

Another area in which time savings may be realized is in the bid and award of the project and the management of the construction work. Staff does not have a recommendation for these activities at this time, but will evaluate them and provide the Board with recommendations in the future.

**Recommendation: Authorize staff to request Caltrans designate TAM to be the implementing agency in developing the PS&E and performing any environmental re-evaluation and right of way work for the 580/101 Connector Project.**

Attachment: none